

LOOKING FOR A CRUISE?

If you have your heart set on a cruise for your honeymoon, **Josanne Cassar** has just the right one for you. She was recently invited to Southampton for the inaugural cruise of the **Liberty of the Seas**, the latest ship in the Royal Caribbean line. The ship is now based in Miami offering weekly cruises to both the Eastern and Western Caribbean

An offer to stay on board one of the largest cruise liners in the world does not come around everyday. Before I knew it I was flying to Heathrow on Air Malta with a group of travel agents, followed by a one and half hour coach trip to Southampton and...there she was.

So huge that for a second you wonder whether it is really a ship, or something else.

Two days doesn't seem like much time to experience what a cruise liner this size has to offer, but somehow, due to a well-organised itinerary, we managed. We were allotted our respective spacious staterooms and our tour began.

One of the first things to learn on a 15 deck

ship is your fore from your aft in order to get your bearings (and to be able to relocate our room!) – but since on each deck by the lifts there are always maps indicating where you are, this is really quite easy.

The rooms on *Liberty of the Seas* range from the standard rooms to the staterooms, owner suites (sleeping up to four people with separate living area), the Royal Suite and the Presidential Family Suite, which sleeps from eight to fourteen people.

A wide variety of restaurants mean you can choose from formal to casual dining to Asian fusion to a burger from Johnny Rockets, a typical '50s diner. There are also three main dining areas, Botticelli, Michelangelo and

Rembrandt, found on separate decks.

Even though you are going to be on your honeymoon, there will be times when you might want to leave your room.

If you are looking for something to do, you don't need to worry about getting bored: three pools, a rock climbing wall, a miniature golf course, an ice skating rink, a Flow rider surf simulator and a jogging path should keep you busy. Plus there's a sports court for playing basketball, paddleball and volleyball. If you just have to fit in your workout, there is a fitness centre with 126 pieces of gym equipment, a boxing ring and a fitness studio. Afterwards you can relax at the spa which offers every conceivable type of beauty treatment. >>



<< Or perhaps you might prefer to just lounge around, do some shopping or have a drink or a cup of coffee. Then the Royal Promenade is the place for you. Looking like something straight out of Main Street, USA, this is a charming boulevard which combines typical 50s American décor (a barber shop, an ice-cream parlour, a pizza place) with touches of an English village (a traditional pub, a café, karaoke). For those looking for something a bit more sophisticated there's also a wine bar, a champagne bar, upmarket shops and a coffee shop. There's always some activity along the Promenade, like the Pirates parade, to keep you entertained.

The night-time entertainment is also wide-ranging: from bars playing jazz music, to a casino, a card room, a cocktail lounge, a Latin themed bar with live music, a piano bar and of course, the Platinum Theatre with different nightly shows. During our stay on board we watched Storybook – well-known fairytales ingeniously set to modern music and dance (the wicked stepmother from Snow White was serenaded with the Carly Simon song You're so Vain). On our first night we also watched magnificent fireworks followed by a breathtaking ice show.



Everyone dresses up for dinner on a cruise

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<< During our stay on board we watched *Ever After* – well-known fairytales ingeniously set to modern music and dance (the wicked step-mother from *Snow White* was serenaded with the Carly Simon song *You’re so Vain*). On our first night we also watched magnificent fireworks followed by a breathtaking ice show.

On the second evening we had the very entertaining Tenors Unlimited who wowed the mostly female audience, particularly a very lively bunch of 700 travel agents from Thomas Cook (apparently most travel agents in the UK are female). The evening ended with a party which lasted until the early hours (unfortunately for us, since we had to leave the ship the next morning at 8am!)

On this inaugural cruise, we were only out at sea for two days, sailing out to Guernsey and back to Southampton.

For its Western Caribbean cruise, however, *Liberty of the Seas* will call at Cozumel, Mexico; George Town, Grand Cayman; Montego Bay, Jamaica; and Labadee, Royal Caribbean’s private destination in Haiti. The Eastern Caribbean itinerary will call at San Juan, Puerto Rico; Phillipsburg, St Maarten; and Labadee, with a third day at sea to take advantage of all that the ship is offering.

Josanne Cassar’s stay on the *Liberty of the Seas* was made possible by Executive Holidays, International Representatives in Malta for Royal Caribbean and Celebrity Cruises, 11, Wenzu Mallia Street, Hamrun HMR 10. For more information phone them on 21226124, 21226128 or 21226129